



Italian Cultural Center & Museum
6821 Fair Oaks Boulevard, Carmichael, CA 95608 • www.italiancenter.net • 916.482.5900

Italian Cultural Society E-Newsletter • March 2022 Edition

Message From The Director



Cari Amici,

The past two years have been a time of challenge for the Italian Cultural Society. Due to the health restrictions, the Society was unable to utilize the Italian Cultural Center for its many cultural programs.

But we adjusted and the Society persevered. We continued to maintain the Italian Center and our main programs through it all. Now we are ready to get moving again as the restrictions are lifted.

During the past two years our community continued to advance our heritage with the construction of new Bocce courts behind the Italian Center and the establishment of a “Little Italian Historic District” in Italian East Sacramento. Our community held a celebration for the new Little Italy District in October. Signs marking the new City district are being developed for placement this Spring.

In January we held our children’s festival, La Festa della Befana, which was postponed in 2021. It was our annual celebration of the Legend of La Befana. The Society volunteers put on the children’s festival which featured our children’s folk-dance troupe, “The Bambini Dancers,” and was a wonderful beginning of our effort to restart all our programs in 2022.

During the past two years we have maintained our full Italian language school program

online despite our in-person classes having to be postponed. Our folk- dance troupes have continued to practice at the Center during this period and are now ready to perform again at local and regional events. Our adult folk-dance troupe, “Balliamo!” is already scheduling new event performances at festivals in Sacramento, Healdsburg, Somerset, Rancho Cordova, Lodi, San Jose, San Francisco and San Mateo.

Our Sunday Italian Radio Show, "*Sacramento Italian Style*" has already returned to broadcasting the best of our Italian and Italian American Music on the air each week. Music and song are an integral part of our Italian American heritage. Italian film is also an important part of our Italian heritage. We will be offering our film series again this spring at the Italian Cultural Center along with a new schedule for our lecture series and other events and activities.

After a two-year postponement, our Italy travel tour program has resumed with a new tour of Sorrento and Sicily set to depart in March.

We can thank the Society staff, Board and volunteers for maintaining our heritage, our Italian Cultural Center, our Italian Language school, our folk-dance troupes, our radio show, our newsletter and our travel program while at the same time working to advance our Italian community over the past two years under less than ideal circumstances.

We can also thank those many people who showed their support for our good work through their memberships and donations. For more information about the programs of the Italian Cultural Society, becoming a member or attending a class visit our website at: italiancenter.net

Your continued support is appreciated.

Bill Cerruti, Director of the Italian Cultural Society

**10,000 YEAR-OLD BABY FOUND IN
ITALIAN CAVE IN LIGURIA**



10,000 Year Old Baby Found In Italian Cave in Liguria

Archeologists studying a cave in Liguria, Italy have found the earliest known burial of a female infant in Europe.

The baby was given the nickname **“Neve”** in honor of a nearby river. She was about two months old when she died 10,000 years ago. The child’s remains were covered in a shroud decorated with dozens of beads and four pendants, all made from shells.

Finding the bones of babies from prehistoric or ancient times is rare because they are extremely fragile. The new discovery is especially unusual because the remains were preserved well enough to extract DNA.

Liguria is a northern Italian region next to France with a long coastline of beaches and beautiful cities and towns known as the “Italian Riviera.” Its Capital is Genoa. Liguria is also a mountainous region whose people, the Genovesi, are known for their longevity.



THE GENOVESI OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA



Photo Above: *Italian family boarding ship at Genoa, 1884*

The Genovesi of Northern California

Ligurian immigrants were among the earliest Italian immigrant groups to settle in the United States during the mid-19th century.

Italian immigrants from the Italian region of Liguria settled in the major cities of the United States and established Italian communities in places like New Orleans, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Chicago, Boston and New York. These communities laid the foundation for the Little Italy neighborhoods that exist to this day.

Genovesi settlers from Liguria, primarily from the area around Genoa [the provincial capital] and the province of Chiavari, became one of the largest regional groups to settle in San Francisco and the other counties of northern California.

The early Italian settlement of the Mother Lode mining counties of northern California by bands of *Genovesi* during the Gold Rush of the 1850's was part of the larger settlement of California by Italian people from the region of Liguria.



Photo Above: *The Seven Sisters* arrived from Genoa in 1863

Lured by the promise of gold and land, the early Italian pioneers came to stay. Here they could use the traditional skills of their Italian heritage to develop the land and region.

The Italian immigrants established themselves in the mining, cattle ranching, lumbering, construction and stone masonry, quarrying, fruit and vegetable market gardens, orchard,

grocery, olive oil, railroading, mercantile, banking, restaurant, hotel and boarding house, and the vineyard and wine industries of the California Gold Country.

Their heaviest settlement was in the southern Mother Lode and by 1870, 25 percent of the Italian population of California lived in the three foothill counties of Amador, Calaveras and Tuolumne. They were soon one of the largest immigrant groups in the Mother Lode. Most came from the same region of Italy and represented the distinctive chain migration of the Italians from the area around Genoa. **To this day the Mother Lode is populated by the descendants of these Italian pioneers who carry on the traditions brought to early California by the people from Italy.**



Photo Above: *Columbus Day Parade float, Mokelumne Hill, CA., c 1890*



Photos Above: (L) **Enrico D'Agostini** in his Vineyard, c. 1949 and (R) **Angelo Noce**, an Italian immigrant to the Mother Lode in 1848 is credited as the “Father of Columbus Day” in the United States.

The arrival of these GENOVESI in California coincided with the early development of the state. As a result, the Italians played a vital role in the creation of California.

Across the State, the Italians settled the state’s farmlands and played a prominent role in developing today’s fruit, vegetable and dairy industries.

By the 1860’s, a large number of *Genovesi* had established themselves as truck farmers in Northern California and soon controlled much of the production of fruits and vegetables. By the 1880’s, Italians dominated the fruit and vegetable industry in the great Central Valleys of California. Across the state 1,200 “*Italian Gardens*” employed 10,000 people, mostly from the provinces surrounding Genoa. Today’s Agri-Business in California is heavily Italian.

Skilled in cultivating fruits, flowers and vegetables in the coastal valleys of their home Regions, immigrants from Liguria and Lucca in Tuscany established truck farms in the empty lands around San Francisco to feed the booming city. The Italian farmers introduced specialty crops from the Italian kitchen – broccoli, eggplant, cardoon, artichokes, sweet basil, the pear-shaped tomato and fennel.

Italian immigrants also left their mark on the California food processing industry.

One such *Genovesi* pioneer was Marco Fontana, who arrived in the United States in 1859

and along with another Ligurian, Antonio Cerruti, established a chain of canneries under the “*Del Monte*” label from their base in San Francisco. Most of their workers were Italian and their cannery soon became the largest food processing corporation in the nation.



The Genovesi also dominated the early fishing industry in California.

The Italian fishermen of the 1850's were mostly *Genovesi*, later to be followed by Sicilian immigrants. It wasn't long before Italian fishermen had established themselves in fishing villages from Eureka to Benicia, Martinez, Pittsburg, San Francisco, Santa Cruz, San Diego, San Pedro, and Monterey. By the 1880's, California had become a leading fishery and its coastal waters were dominated by Italian fishermen and their graceful sailing “*feluccas*.” By 1910, Italians controlled 80 percent of the fishing industry in California.

Another enterprising Ligurian was Domenico Ghirardelli who traveled through the gold mines in the 1850's selling chocolates and hard candies. He settled in San Francisco after the Gold Rush and formed the Ghirardelli Chocolate empire, with Italian immigrant labor, at the site of the present day “**Ghirardelli Square.**”

The California wine industry owes much to the Italian founders of the industry.

Italians have been planting vineyards and making wine in America since the early colonial days when Filippo Mazzei planted vineyards with Thomas Jefferson. Mazzei is credited with influencing Jefferson to add the words that “all men are created equal,” to the Declaration of Independence.

The founding of the Italian Swiss Colony at Asti in 1881 by Ligurian Andrea Scarboro as a cooperative of Italian immigrants from the wine growing regions of northern Italy promoted the widespread participation and success of the Italians in the California wine industry and the vineyards of the Napa and Sonoma valleys. The Colony soon became one of the largest producers of wine and dominated much of the US wine market during its heyday.



Photos Above: **Lombardo Winery** - est. 1863. One of the earliest Italian pioneers of the wine industry in the Mother Lode was Giovanni Lombardo who started the winery in El Dorado County. It is still owned by an Italian family.

Italian Ranches dot the Mother Lode, and many have Italian Stone ovens from the past that were used to bake bread or focaccia



Photos Above: *Genovese Felucca Boat and Ghirardelli Square, San Francisco*

One of the most inspiring of California's Italians was Amadeo Pietro (AP)

Giannini, who was born in San Jose in 1870 to Italian immigrants from Genoa.

Branch banking as we know it was started in the United States when Giannini started the first statewide system of banking in the nation by opening branches of his “Bank of Italy” in the Italian neighborhoods across California to serve the Italian immigrants. Italians provided most of his workforce. In 1930, he changed the name to “Bank of America.” Mr. Giannini’s bank soon became the largest bank in the world.



Photos Above: One of the first Bank of Italy branches in Los Angeles, Pico Heights, 1918 and A. P. Giannini in 1935 at age 65 (1870-1949)



Photo Above: *The Giovanni Oneto Family, circa 1884.*

Left to right, seated: Mary, Aurelia, Kate: standing: Americus, Geronima, "J.B.," Giovanni, and Amelia. All the children were born on the Ranch.

The Oneto family at the Italian Pa-ta-ta Ranch started at Bald Mountain in 1862 by six young Italian miners and referred to as "Little Genoa" for the large number of Italian families that lived there and their use of the Genovesi dialect

These Genovesi pioneers: Giannini, Fontana, Ghiradelli, and Sbarboro were all business associates as well as Italian community leaders. All established companies that had national markets and relied upon Italians as their primary workforce. They played a prominent role in the creation of California's basic industries and today's economy.

All four men were also actively involved in the Italian community. They served together on the first Board of Directors of the Italian Welfare Agency established in 1916 to serve the needs of the rapidly growing Italian Colony of the San Francisco Bay area. The Italian Welfare Agency is still in operation and has been renamed the Italian American Community Services Agency.

The *Genovesi* immigrants were responsible for much of the success of the Italian immigrants from all regions of Italy who streamed to California during the decades before and after the turn of the 20th Century. **Genovesi pioneers played a prominent role in creating industries that provided work to the Italian immigrants and aided in their advancement in American society.**

The Italian immigrants were often relegated to the lowest occupations and in San Francisco were excluded from the trade unions until the 1920's and beyond. As a result, some Italians in San Francisco turned to occupations open to them like the garbage industry. Soon, they turned these occupations into successful cooperative enterprises that exist to this day.

More than most people realize, the Italian Americans helped shape the cultural landscape of California and the modern West. The enterprise and success of these Italian pioneers is a unique legacy – one shared by all of us.

The contributions of the Italians to the development of California are often unrecognized by historians and left out of the history of California. This history and their accomplishments deserve to be acknowledged, studied and told.



It's well known that from the 1880's to the 1940's, the Italians were among the largest of the immigrant groups to settle in America. But less is known about the earlier wave of Italians from Northern Italy who established their economic and cultural communities across the United States. It was in California that their communities and enterprises flourished. We have all benefitted from their legacy. From our access to banking services to the food we eat, we are indebted to these pioneers for the inheritance they have left us.

Learn more about the Italian settlement of the California foothills by clicking the link.

"LA NOSTRA STORIA"

The exhibit is also on permanent display at the Italian Cultural Center in Carmichael. Visit our website for additional articles about the Italian-American experience at www.italiancenter.net.

BANK OF ITALY BUILDING MARKS 100 YEARS



Photo Above: The Bank of Italy Branch building in Livermore, CA as it stands today.

Bank of Italy Building Marks 100 Years

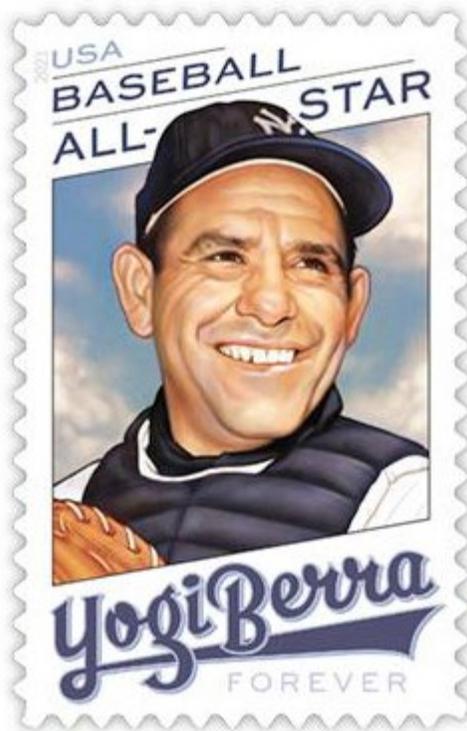
The Bank of Italy in Livermore, California opened its door 100 years ago in January, 1921 as the 13th branch of the Bank of Italy. Just nine years after opening the Branch, the Bank of Italy consolidated with Bank of America., which continued operations in the facility until 1957.

The Historic Italian Renaissance building then became Livermore's City Hall until 1978, when it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It has since been restored and is now occupied by the local newspaper, The Independent. The original marble floors and the vaults are still in place.

The Bank of Italy was founded in 1904 by Amedeo Pietro Giannini, the American born son of Italian immigrants. His bank was meant for the “Little fellow,” the laboring immigrants other banks would not serve. The Bank of Italy was the first to loan money to the survivors of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. Giannini personally distributed the money to earthquake victims from a plank and barrel stand at Fisherman’s Wharf and from his horse drawn carriage. His collateral was the shake of the hand. The Italian neighborhood of North Beach in San Francisco was the first to be rebuilt after the earthquake.

Giannini is considered an Italian American hero by Italian Americans. He is often referred to as “The Giant of The West” for his financing of the Golden Gate and San Francisco Bay Bridges, the development of the wine industry and early Hollywood including Walt Disney’s first animated Film, Cinderella.”

BASEBALL ALL STAR YOGI BERRA STAMP ISSUED



Baseball legend Yogi Berra was recently honored with a U.S. postage Stamp. Yogi Berra was one of the most beloved players in mid-20th century major League baseball history.

The New York Yankee catcher was an Italian American icon and one of the best-known catchers of all time and a powerful hitter. The 18 time All Star and 10- time World Series

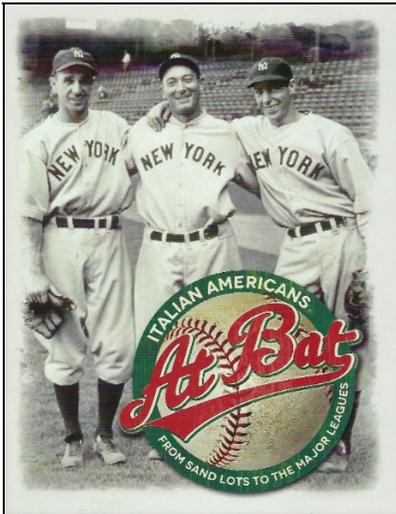
champion during his 18 seasons with the Yankees was a crowd favorite. He was inducted into the National Baseball Hall of fame in 1972.

He was born Lawrence Peter Berra in the Little Italy section of St Louis to Italian immigrant parents. He was known not only for his formidable accomplishments in the sport but also as a personality whose good nature and amusing quips endeared him to the nation.

He famously coined the phrase "It ain't over till it's over." It's no easy feat to be featured on a postage stamp. Yogi might say "The future ain't what it used to be". He claims "I never said half the things I said."

Between the 1880s and the 1920s more than 4 million Italians arrived in America. Italian American Major League baseball players like Yogi Berra, Joe Di Maggio, Tony Lazzeri, Frank Crossetti, and Phil Rizzuto led the New York Yankees to many victories at the World Series. Spanning the Lazzeri through Berra years, the Yankees won 19 world series in 37 years.

These Italian American players changed the way Italian Americans were perceived in America and helped them gain acceptance in a new culture. They were both ethnic heroes and icons of American culture.

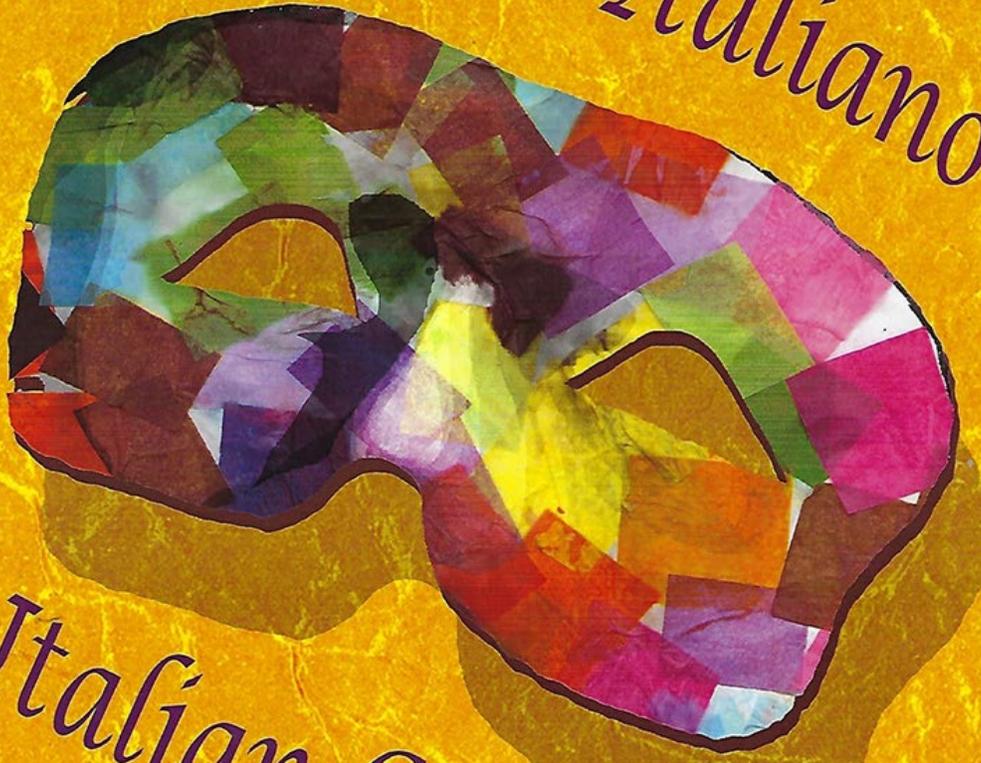


Learn more about the lasting legacy of these men in the article, click below to read

["HOW YANKEES BECAME ITALIAN"](#)

CARNIVALE ITALIANO

Carnevale Italiano



Italian Carnival

*An Introduction to One of Italy's
Most Joyful Celebrations*



Claudia Cerulli

Read - Play - Learn
Language
activities
inside!

Carnevale Italiano! *One of Italy's oldest traditions, Carnevale is celebrated throughout Italy and every city, town and village has its own traditions.*

The celebration originates from ancient Rome to mark the coming of Spring. It is a time of parties, parades, masked balls, jugglers, magicians, costumes, masks, singing and dancing.

Some of the well-known masks and costumes that have become the symbol of Carnevale in Italy date back to the "Commedia dell'Arte." This is a comic form of street theater that developed in Italy in the 15th century which featured familiar characters, each renowned for its distinctive mask and costumes and known as stock characters. Many Italian towns have their own stock characters and some, like "Arlecchino" {harlequin}, have become known

throughout Italy.

Arlecchino is the most popular costume character. He is from Bergamo and wears a colorful costume made of diamond shaped pieces of Fabric. Other popular characters are “Colombina” (Venice), “Pulcinella” (Naples), “Gianduia” (Piemonte), “Brighella” (Bergamo), “Capitan Spaventa” [a soldier], “Balanzone” (Bologna), “Meneghino” (Milan), “Meo Patacca” (Rome), and “Pantalone” (Venice).



Some of the most famous and unique Carnivale in Italy are those of Venice, Viareggio, Acireale, and Ivrea. The Carnivale of Venice is a 900 year old tradition where colorful masks and spectacular costumes fill the streets of the city for 10 days.

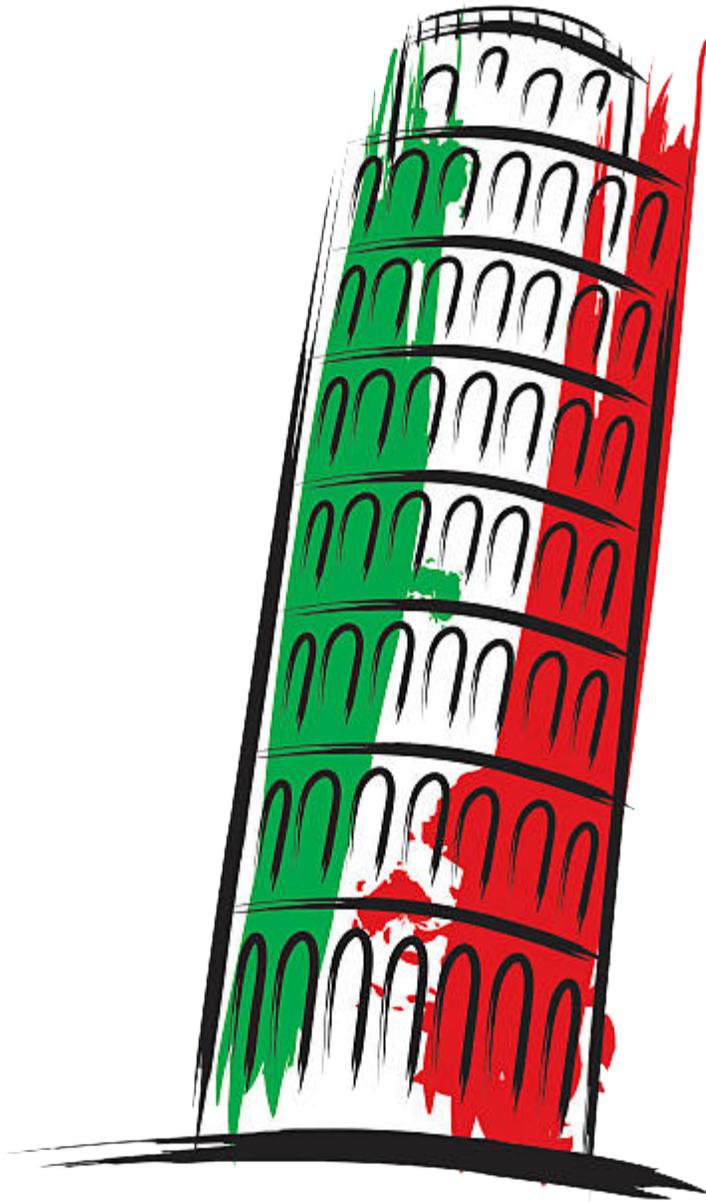
The **Carnevale of Viareggio** is the most famous in Tuscany and features a parade of large paper floats that tower over two stories. The **Carnevale of Acireale** in Sicily is famous for its parades of flower floats. The **Carnevale of Ivrea** is one of the oldest and known for its battle of the Oranges. Every year its citizens split into two teams and throw oranges at each other. On the last day, a bonfire is lit in the middle of each districts squares to signal the end of the celebrations.

Carnevale Italiano is one of Italy's most joyful and famous celebrations which attracts visitors from around the world.



Photos Above: One of the amazing floats featured in *Carnivale di Viareggio*

SEEKING ITALIAN LANGUAGE TEACHERS



Seeking Italian Language Teachers

The Italian Cultural Society is seeking Italian Language teachers for our online and in-person classes. Each class meets once weekly for two hours and instructors can choose days and hour of class meetings. Qualified candidates will have native or near native fluency, experience in teaching a foreign language to adult learners and want to work in a community student-centered environment. All applicants must be legally authorized to work in the United States.

Classes are offered year-round with Spring, Winter, Fall and Summer quarters. Teaching commitments are flexible and may vary from quarter to quarter.

For more information or to apply, please contact our Language School Director Patrizia Cinquini Cerruti at 916-482-5900 or by email at italy@italiancenter.net



COLUMBUS DAY ADDED TO SCHOOL CALENDARS



★ SAVE COLUMBUS DAY ★

PROTECT & PRESERVE OUR PAST

COLUMBUS DAY IS ADDED TO LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT CALENDARS

Saving Columbus Day in the United States has had its struggles and successes. Recently, several local school districts have added Columbus Day to their school calendars.

The Westfield New Jersey School District has added Columbus Day back to its school calendar. And the Magnolia Independent School District in Texas has also added Columbus Day as a school holiday for the 2022-2023 school year. These are encouraging developments and ones it is hoped will be repeated in other local school districts across the nation.

Columbus Day represents the foundation of our nation. It also represents an important holiday for Italian American communities and Italian American students. It is important to Italian Americans that the traditional celebrations of Columbus Day be maintained as part of our American and our Italian American heritage.

In many ways Columbus Day represents the unity of America. It is both a symbol of America and Italian American unity. Maintaining that unity against the false narratives about Columbus that are used as an excuse to demean his reputation and accomplishments, take away the Holiday that celebrates him, ban the parades in his name, and tear down the statues erected in his honor, is a challenge for this generation.

On July 4th 2020, a man took a hammer to the head of a Columbus statue located at the Waterbury, Connecticut City Hall during that year's summers protests and riots. The damage was significant. A local Italian American organization paid a sculptor to restore the statue. The man has been ordered to pay a hefty fine for the restoration as well as being charged with criminal violations. Italian America endured the pain and humiliation of seeing many Columbus statues destroyed or removed during the assaults on them during 2020. Italian Americans fought back through lawsuits and political action to save many of the statues under attack for posterity. The continuing battle to save these statues goes on.



The success of our Italian American organizations like the Society depend on the support of the Italian community.

THERE ARE SEVERAL TAX-DEDUCTIBLE WAYS TO SUPPORT THE ICS:

- * Join Our Italian Center Fund [RENAISSANCE CIRCLES](#)
- * Leave A Legacy Gift Through Our [HERITAGE SOCIETY](#)
 - * Make A [DONATION](#) Online or by Mail

**PLEASE SHARE THIS EMAIL WITH YOUR FAMILY & FRIENDS BY CLICKING ON
THE SOCIAL MEDIA OR EMAIL LINK BELOW. Grazie!**